

Field Notes

(February-March 2019)

by Pete Dunten

Geese through Gulls

Groups of three **Greater White-fronted Geese** visited Sunnyvale Baylands from 5 – 6 Feb (KSc, SW) and Byxbee Park between 9 – 22 Mar (MJM, TS). The high count was 22 in a flock over Newby Island on 11 Feb (AR). A group of fourteen **Cackling Geese** settled in at Arzino Ranch on 4 Feb (WGB) and stayed through 10 Feb (GL) before dwindling to ten geese on 14 Feb (GL), then to two geese on 24 Feb (MJM, RJ, MMR). Two were nearby at the Don Edwards EEC on 21 Mar (TH). Lake Cunningham hosted the only other sizable group of Cacklers, with six present on 28 Feb (SPz). A single **Snow Goose** was found in Coyote Valley along Bailey Ave in the first week of January and again on 28 Jan (MJM, JPa) and 30 Jan (RWR). A **Long-tailed Duck** on 24 Feb on a closed refuge pond added another record for this winter (MMR, MJM, RJ). A **Red-throated Loon** was seen at Palo Alto Baylands on 9 Mar (BF) and one visited Adobe Creek for a short period between 14 – 15 Mar (BLL, VLL, ST).

ter was at Almaden Lake on 6 - 7 Feb (WP, DPe). On 11 Feb, one was at the Newby Island recycling facility (AR). From 16 - 21 Feb, one was at Alviso Pond A16 (MJM, m. ob.); it was found dead on 22 Feb (MJM). Three more Glaucous Gulls were reported in late February and early March. Different individuals were at Alviso A16 on 23 Feb (ST, JTh) and 24 Feb (RJ, MMR, MJM). The latter bird moved to Almaden Lake on 1 Mar (STu). And on 2 Mar, a Glaucous Gull moved between Sobrato HS in Morgan Hill early in the day (SCR) to Anderson Reservoir, where it was enjoyed by members of a Palo Alto Adult School field trip (MDo et al.). The latest report of a Glaucous Gull was from New Chicago Marsh on 23 Mar (NoA). The number of individuals seen this winter was at least as many as seen in any previous year in the county.

Swifts through Kingbirds

There were scattered reports of early **Vaux's Swifts** beginning in February. Six passed over Almaden Lake on 12 Feb (RWR, FV, SPz), six were over the Guadalupe River at the Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD) on 3 Mar (AVe), one was over Lake Cunningham on 5 Mar (BM), and two were over Al-

OSP on 12 Mar had wandered outside its known breeding range (DgJ). A **Pacific-slope Flycatcher** at Frenchman's Park at Stanford on 6 and 10 Feb was out-of-place in time and likely a wintering bird (TGr). The first Pac-slope spring migrant was at J Grant CP on 16 Mar (MDo et al.). The first **Hammond's Flycatcher** of the spring was about a week early on 26 Mar at Belgatos Park in Los Gatos (RbC). The earliest spring arrival date in previous years was 1 Apr. The **Cassin's Kingbirds** in the south county appear to be increasing in numbers, and it will be interesting to see if they expand their breeding range. They've nested at two locations for several years. This year one to three Cassin's Kingbirds have been seen at the SCRWA ponds outside of Gilroy, as well as at their traditional location on San Felipe Rd. One was at the SCRWA Ponds on 12 Feb (MJM), three were present on 20 Feb (SPz), and one was still there on 21 Mar (MJM). A pair returned to San Felipe Rd on 14 Mar (ST). A single Cassin's Kingbird was further north along Dougherty Ave in Morgan Hill, west of Ogier Ponds, on 24 Feb (GL, WP, KON). February also brought our first winter record of a **Western Kingbird**, one photographed along the Don Edwards NWR entrance road on 10 Feb (JWm, MHs). The first returning Western Kingbird arrived at Rancho San Vicente on 15 Mar (JPa).

Vireos through Finches

Both **Cassin's Vireo** and **Warbling Vireo** returned in March, with the first Cassin's at the Cooley Picnic Area in Stevens Creek CP on 29 Mar (ST, MDo) and the first Warbling Vireos along the Calero Creek Trail (HM) and at McClellan Ranch (PDU) on 16 Mar. A wintering **House Wren** was along Matador Creek bordering the Palo Alto FCB on 29 Jan (PDU). Another, at the Sunnyvale WPCP on 28 Feb was also likely a wintering individual (WGB). The **Phainopepla** at Guadalupe Oak Grove Park since late November was seen through 6 Mar (DW, AVe). The latest sighting from Almaden Quicksilver CP, where another Phainopepla arrived in late November, was on 7 Feb (JPa). On Feb 10, one was discovered at the Stanford Dish (SPv). On 18 Feb a wintering **Yellow Warbler** was found along the Coyote Creek Trail below Anderson Reservoir (JH). The last report from the phenomenal winter bonanza of **Palm Warblers** was of one in San Jose's Silver Leaf neighborhood on 19 Feb (MCo). The first returning **Black-throated Gray Warbler** graced Palo Alto's Foothills Park on 25 Mar (GHa). A **Hermit Warbler** at Sanborn

Red-throated Loon by Barry Langdon-Lassagne



A **Ruff** was present from mid-October into the third week of November along the Don Edwards NWR entrance road. After a long absence, on 12 Feb the Ruff returned (ABo). It was found through 1 Mar (m. ob., EH). Among the hundreds of roosting gulls on Alviso A16, a **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was a nice find on 19 Feb (AR). The gull returned on 22 and 23 Feb (MJM, ST, JTh). The **first Glaucous Gull** of many found this win-

ter was at Almaden Lake on 9 Mar (BW). The **Red-naped Sapsucker** wintering at Guadalupe Creek along Hicks Rd was seen as late as 24 Feb (JPa). Another was seen at Townsend Park in San Jose on 2 Feb (MSm). Two of the locally wintering **Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers** were found as late as 11 Feb and 5 Mar, at Lake Cunningham (KON) and at the SCVWD (BLL, VLL), respectively. A **Pileated Woodpecker** at Coyote Valley

Field Notes *cont'd*

CP on 1 Mar (ST) and 11 Mar (MJM) may have wintered locally. The wintering **Chipping Sparrows** at TJ Martin Park remained through the period (m. ob.), with a high count of fifteen on 26 Jan, and twelve still noted on 18 Mar (both JPa). Another small flock of Chipping Sparrows with as many as eleven birds was discovered at Penetencia Creek Park on 6 Feb (WP, KON). At least one Chippie remained at the park through 18 Mar (TKP). A **Grasshopper Sparrow** staying for the winter at Sierra Azul OSP was a nice find on 5 Feb (BLL, VLL). At least one of the **Swamp Sparrows** at Alviso Marina remained through 20 Mar (DW). On 31 Mar one was along the Guadalupe River below Blossom Hill Rd (JPa). The **Summer Tanager** found near Guadalupe Mines Rd and Lavender Creek in late December stayed in the area through 20 Mar (KJ). At Vasona CP the Summer Tanager first noted in early January was last observed on 2 Feb (TB). Another of the flood of returning migrants was a **Black-headed Grosbeak**, first sighted at Anderson Reservoir on 26 Mar (SCR). One that wintered locally in San Jose's Dry Creek neighborhood was last recorded on 3 Feb (JaJ). The 15th of March brought both **Hooded** and **Bull-ock's Orioles**. A single Hooded Oriole was in a West San Jose neighborhood on that date (fide LM) and a single Bull-ock's Oriole was at Coyote Valley OSP (DCn). A tally of 32 **Purple Finches** on 29 Mar along Mines Rd in the Dia-

blo Range in the northeastern corner of the county was a nice count (WGB). The finches range widely in search of blooming trees before the beginning of the nesting season.

(BM), Lisa Myers (LM), Kitty O'Neil (KON), Janna Pauser (JPa), Sergey Pavlov (SPv), William Pelletier (WP), Don Pendleton (DPe), Sergio Perez (SPz), Tracy K Pham (TKP), Bob Reiling



Swamp Sparrow by Teale Fristoe

Observers: Noah Arthur (NoA), Terry Blows (TB), Abe Borker (ABo), Bill Bousman (WGB), Robin Carle (RbC), Dani Christensen (DCn), Michael Costello (MCo), Matthew Dodder (MDo), Bob Foehring (BF), Tom Grey (TGr), Jane Haley (JH), Garth Harwood (GHa), Megan Hausler (MHs), Eric Hopson (EH), Tom Hurley (TH), Richard Jeffers (RJ), Kent Johnson (KJ), Douglas Joo (DgJ), Jane Jordan (JaJ), Barry Langdon-Lassagne (BLL), Virginia Langdon-Lassagne (VLL), Garrett Lau (GL), Mike Mammoser (MJM), Hugh McDevitt (HM), Brooke Miller

(RWR), Alex Rinkert (AR), Mike Rogers (MMR), Steve Rottenborn (SCR), Kathie Schroeck (KSc), Tom Segarra (TS), Marc Simmel (MSm), Jim Thomas (JTh), Steve Tracey (ST), Steve Tucker (STu), Frank Vanslager (FV), Ann Verdi (AVe), Bill Walker (BW), Dave Weber (DW), Susan Weinstein (SW), John Weismuller (JWm)

Please send notice of rarities to Pete Dunten via email at pdunten@gmail.com